

MAGNETIC WRITING SCREEN DISPERSION MEDIUM

This application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional patent application Serial No. 60/289,798, filed May 10, 2001.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

5 Magnetic writing screens are popular toys with young children. These toys consist of a screen in a housing containing a dispersion medium. The dispersion medium contains magnetic material such as iron powder. A pen having a magnetic tip is drawn across the screen causing the dispersion medium to be drawn up against the underside of the screen. By tracing the pen across the screen, the user can create drawings and figures. A sliding mechanism is usually employed to remove the dispersion medium from the underside of the screen to erase the drawings and begin anew.

10 The dispersion medium must be able to be attracted by the relatively weak magnet of the pen. Also, the dispersion medium must create good contrast and clear drawing lines. The dispersion medium must adequately cling to the underside of the screen but be easily removed under the action of a device such as a sliding mechanism. The complete removal of the dispersion medium from the underside of the screen is necessary to insure the long lasting use of the toy.

15 The prior art discloses several types of dispersion mediums used in magnetic writing screen toys. Problems with the prior art include the toxicity of the dispersion medium. Because it is possible that a child can break the housing, the dispersion medium can leak from the toy. For this reason, it is very important that the substance be non-toxic. Also, some dispersion mediums have poor contrast between black and white. The result is that the drawn line is blurred and broken. Some dispersion mediums have been developed which have very good contrast when drawn on a screen. However, these dispersion mediums are hard to erase from the screen. Eventually, permanent black spots appear on the screen after the toy has been used multiple times.

20 Once this occurs, drawings made in the future are not as clear.

It is an object of the invention to provide a magnetic dispersion medium that is non-toxic.

It is another object of the invention to provide a magnetic dispersion medium that provides good contrast when lines are drawn on the magnetic screen.

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a liquid dispersion medium that is easily erased from the screen.

It is yet another object of the invention to provide a dispersion medium that can be used to draw lines on the screen hundreds of times without creating permanent black marks on the screen.

These and other objects of the invention will become apparent after reading the disclosure of the invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A magnetic dispersion medium is used in a magnetic writing screen toy. The dispersion medium is attracted to the underside of the screen when a magnetic tipped pen is passed over the upper surface of the screen. A user can create drawings and figures. The dispersion medium is non-toxic, creates lines having good contrast and can be easily erased without permanently forming black marks on the screen. The dispersion medium works well in temperature ranges between -20°C to 45°C.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The bulk of the liquid dispersion medium is liquid paraffin, commonly known as "white oil", that is a mixture of alkanes and cycloparaffins. Silica (SiO_2) is added as a thickener and titanium dioxide (TiO_2) is added as a colorant. Both of these ingredients are present in 1.5% to 3% by weight. A second colorant, benzo oxazole fluorescent whitener, commonly sold under the trade name Uvitex OB. Uvitex OB is added in the amount of 0.005% to 0.0010% by weight. Iron powder accounts for 13% to 20% by weight of the mixture. The iron powder is made by grinding electrical iron steel sheets containing up to 17%

manganese and selecting iron particles less than 100 microns in diameter. No other special processing is done to the iron powder. Of course, the iron powder is what is attracted by the magnetic tipped pen and the balance of the magnetic dispersion medium imparts the desirable characteristics to one another. The dispersion liquid medium is encased within polyvinylchloride honeycomb cellular structure sandwiched between two transparent top sheets of polyvinylchloride and a bottom opaque sheet of polyvinylchloride. An adhesive is used to bond the honeycomb cells to the top and bottom sheets to form a hermetically sealed housing. The magnetic dispersion medium fills the honeycomb cells and is sealed within them. The adhesive used to bond the honeycomb cells to the top and bottom sheets consists of cyclohexanone and polyvinylchloride. The cyclohexanone evaporates during use.

Once the housing is formed, it is suitable for use. During use, a magnetic tipped pen attracts the iron powder to the top sheet leaving a line of black iron particles visible in the white dispersion medium. The thick dispersion medium prevents the iron particles from moving or settling due to gravity. In this way, the user is able to form lines having good contrast in order to create figures or drawings. The iron particles will remain on the underside of the top sheets until removed. For removal, a magnetic strip is moved across the underside of the bottom sheet to pull the iron particles away from the top sheet, therefore erasing the lines. This process can be repeated hundreds of times without the iron powder permanently adhering to the underside of the top sheets.

A preferred embodiment of the invention has been described; however, several variations and modifications would be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art. The disclosure is not intended to be limited in any way, but the invention is defined by the appended claims.